

U.S. Embassy Dushanbe ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

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Alumni in Tajikistan Participate in Copenhagen Climate Change Discussion

On December 14, 2009, at the [U.S. Embassy](#), [U.S. government exchange alumni](#) gathered to watch a live streaming video of the [UN Framework Convention on Climate Change held in Copenhagen, Denmark](#) (December 7-18, 2009). The topic covered was the development agenda for clean energy and the transfer of technologies. Alumni and other members of the public interested in environmental issues watched the streaming video, and participated in a group discussion afterward. Almaz Saifutdinov, an economic and commercial specialist at the U.S. Embassy, led the discussion and talked about the use of alternative energy sources in Tajikistan.



USG program alumni watching a streaming video of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change held in Copenhagen, Denmark at U.S. Embassy Dushanbe, December 14, 2009.

This event helped to connect the Tajik audience to an outside discussion occurring internationally on this important topic, and also increased their awareness about clean energy technologies. Participants shared their experience and knowledge and were able to have a constructive dialogue about the importance of mainstreaming climate change in development projects, government projects, and daily life.

U.S. and UK Ambassadors to Tajikistan Meet with Khujand American Corner Visitors



U.S. Ambassador Ken Gross and UK Ambassador Trevor Moore speaking with USG exchange program alumni about U.S. and UK policy in Tajikistan at the Khujand American Corner, December 17, 2009.

The first simultaneous visit of the two embassies' Ambassadors to Khujand's American Corner was really exciting for the American Corner visitors. U.S. Ambassador Mr. Ken Gross and U.K. Ambassador Mr. Trevor Moore were met with the warm and traditional Tajik welcome of bread and salt at the entrance of the American Corner.

This was a great opportunity for the alumni and American Corner visitors to ask policy-related questions to both Ambassadors. The participants asked lots of questions about visa issues, exchange programs, healthcare, and current events in Afghanistan. One participant asked Ambassador

Moore about the possibility of opening a UK corner in Khujand, similar to the American one, in order to get more information about education opportunities in the UK.

The USG exchange program alumni expressed their appreciation to Ambassador Gross, as well as to the U.S. Government, for providing so many exchange opportunities to Tajikistan. A TEA alumnus suggested establishing an exchange program specifically for healthcare professionals. Ambassador Gross was glad to hear the alumni's ideas and encouraged them to approach the U.S. Embassy's Public Diplomacy Section with their

ideas. A UGRAD alumna asked to have more English Language Fellows in Tajikistan, and a TEA alumna spoke about her activities and thanked Ambassador Gross for the alumni grant opportunities. A GCEP alumnus asked about Tajik students arranging internships in the U.S. to learn more about U.S. business practices. PAO Rachel Cooke suggested that the Summer Work and Travel Program provides a good opportunity to improve business and customer service skills.

Dean of the Rinker Center for International Programs at Ball State University Talks about U.S. Education at Dushanbe American Corner



Kenneth Holland shows a map of U.S. colleges to the students at the Dushanbe American Corner on December 17, 2009.

On December 17, 2009, American Corner Dushanbe hosted Mr. Kenneth Holland, Dean of Ball State University, to have a dis-

cussion with the American Corner visitors about the education system in the U.S.

He briefed the students about the types of schools in the U.S.—including private and public high schools, community colleges, and state and private universities—as well as about the process of applying, tuition fees, and scholarships. Mr. Holland also provided general information about Ball State University's requirements for admission and study.

After he finished, the students asked questions about how to study at a university in the U.S. The students were especially curious about the credit system, TOEFL, and GRE tests.

Mr. Holland encouraged the students to apply to Ball State University. The students gained lots of useful information about education and universities in the U.S.

"Islam in America" Video Screening at Dushanbe American Corner

On December 15, 2009, the Dushanbe American Corner hosted a film screening of the documentary, "Islam in America." About 15 students from Tajik State Pedagogical University watched this film and participated in the discussion led by an American English Language Fellow, Bethany Gustafson.

After watching the film, students divided into three groups and then shared their opinions about the film. The first group talked about Muslims in the USA. The second one talked about other religions' perception of Islam. The third group talked about marriages be-

tween Muslims and people from other religions. The groups engaged in a very long and interesting debate moderated by Bethany.

The students learned about Islam, American Muslims, and the relationship between Islam and other world religions. The film emphasizes Islam's kinship with Christianity and Judaism.

At the end, the American Corner Coordinator distributed the IIP publication, "Being Muslim in America" to all of the participants.



Students discussing the film in small groups at the Dushanbe American Corner on December 15, 2009.

Ambassador Ken Gross Hosts English Language Teachers for First Chai Chat



Ambassador Gross and Public Affairs Officer Rachel Cooke with English Language Teachers at the U.S. Ambassador's residence, Dushanbe, January 21, 2010.

On January 21, U.S. Ambassador Ken Gross hosted eight English language teachers for his first Chai Chat, an informal topical discussion at his residence. The teachers, who were from a variety of schools, universities, and NGOs, introduced themselves, talked about their experiences, and shared teaching methodologies. The discussion focused on the issues they face as English teachers, includ-

ing the lack of teaching resources, how to incorporate interactive methodologies into their lesson plans, and the different challenges they face at the universities and schools. The teachers noted that the lack of English-language teachers is a specific problem in Tajikistan, especially in rural areas. They also said that it is very important to train young teachers in interactive methods of teaching, so they can make their classes more interesting. The work of a teacher is very hard and requires a lot of preparation, and the best reward for a teacher is seeing the students' enthusiastic faces and interest in actually learning English. Most of the invited teachers currently are or have been involved in U.S. Embassy programs, including the TEA exchange, English Teacher Mentor Program, and the English Access Microscholarship Program. One of the English language teachers is a deputy in the English Language Teaching Association of Tajikistan. She spoke about the work of the association and was hoping to see the association more active in the future. Teachers thanked the U.S. Embassy for the trainings, programs and sessions organized over the years, noting that the programs produced great results and made the teacher's experience stronger. The Ambassador plans to host similar discussions at his residence regularly.

Alumni Outreach Page at the U.S. Embassy Website

In December 2009, the Public Affairs Section created an Alumni Outreach page at the U.S. Embassy Dushanbe website: <http://dushanbe.usembassy.gov/alumni.html>. This section of the website offers information and resources for U.S. Government-funded educational and professional exchange program alumni. Types of information available on the webpage will include embassy-sponsored grant programs for the alumni and quarterly newsletters that contain articles by the alumni, as well as their success stories. With the webpage, the alumni will be able to connect and widen their alumni community in Tajikistan and in the world through links to the Alumni Tajikistan webpage on Facebook and the State Alumni Global Online Community.

The new webpage is an effort to strengthen the embassy's alumni outreach initiatives and disseminate information on the embassy's opportunities aimed at supporting the returning alumni.

Discussion of U.S. and Tajik Customs and Traditions



Participants discussing U.S. and Tajik traditions on the stage at Khujand State University, December 21, 2009.

On December 21, 2009, Fulbright alumna Mehrinisso Abdullaeva, in cooperation with other USG alumni and instructors from Khujand State University, organized a big party to celebrate the differences and similarities between the USA and Tajikistan. The event was held at the Faculty of Foreign Languages of Khujand State University, with about 280 participants. USG program alumni, both teachers and students, shared their

knowledge about U.S. customs and traditions with over 250 students and 30 teachers who never visited the U.S.

The presentations and performances helped to increase mutual understanding and build trust between the United States and Tajikistan.

Students from Multikid Educational Center Visit the Dushanbe American Corner

On December 18, 2009, American Corner Dushanbe hosted students from the Multikid Educational Center for the American Corner presentation. About 15 students with their English teacher, participated in the presentation.

The American Corner Coordinator, Gulchehra Begova, gave a brief introduction

about the resources and services of the American Corner. Also, the students learned about the meaning of the stars and stripes on the American Flag through a quiz featured by the Coordinator. Two of the students who gave the right answers to the quiz received InfoUSA CDROMs as prizes.



A teacher shows a book to the students at the Dushanbe American Corner, December 18, 2009.



The students write stories at the Dushanbe American Corner, December 18, 2009.

Khorog American Corner and FLEX Alumni Raise Money to Support Orphans



The FLEX alumni visited a local NGO to raise money for orphans in Khorog, December 16, 2009.

On December 16, 2009, the Khorog American Corner, in cooperation with FLEX alumni, prepared and sold cookies to the local and international organizations in Khorog in order to raise funds for orphans at a Khorog boarding school. Local and international organizations also joined the FLEX students and helped with organizing the event. Mr. Garry Muller, a representative of GTZ/CDD, kindly donated two boxes of clothes to the children of the boarding school.

The event really brought together the FLEX alumni in Khorog. They raised enough money to buy warm shoes, socks, and some small presents, and they were also able to stage a New Year's performance for the boarding school children. This was the best New Year's present for the orphaned children at the boarding school, and the FLEX alumni were very proud and enjoyed it so much.

American Christmas Cookies in Dushanbe



Public Affairs Officer Rachel Cooke and FLEX alumni baking Christmas cookies at the PAO residence, Dushanbe, December 19, 2009.

On December 19, Public Affairs Officer Rachel Cooke invited several FLEX alumni to her residence to bake Christmas cookies. The alumni enthusiastically participated in this event and expressed lots of creativity in introducing their own recipes used by their families. They shared their study and living experiences while on their exchanges in the U.S. Also, the alumni had a tour in the residence of PAO and saw how Americans decorate for the holidays with small villages and nativity scenes. They were interested in the handicrafts the PAO had from Indonesia, Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Mexico.

This event gave an opportunity to the Public Affairs Section and the alumni to connect, exchange ideas, and share their culture with each other.

TEA Alumna Gives a Presentation to the Students at Qurghon-Teppa American Corner

On December 23, 2009, the Qurghon-Teppa American Corner invited TEA alumna, Zebo Murodova, to speak to high school and university students about experience living and studying in the U.S. She gave a brief introduction to the TEA program and then shared her knowledge about North Dakota and its brief history, Native American tribes, American schools, American life and culture, and sightseeing in the U.S.

Zebo showed short videos and pictures that she took in the U.S. The students were very excited and interested to hear about the U.S. and the way people live there. They asked a lot of questions about high schools, American families, and food. The really enjoyed hearing all of Zebo's interesting and useful information about the U.S. and about the great experience their English teacher had in the U.S. during her exchange program. Zebo's story inspired the students to study hard and learn English so they could also have an experience like hers someday.



TEA alumna Zebo Murodova shows a map of the U.S. to students at the Qurghon-Teppa American Corner, December 23, 2009.

On January 12, 2010, TEA alumna, Zebo Murodova, organized a workshop for teachers of various subjects, including Tajik Literature, Algebra, Math, History, Geography, English, and Physics. Zebo spoke to the teachers about new methods and approaches to education, such as cooperative learning, differentiated instruction, and multiple intelligence.

The teachers all enjoyed the training, especially the game "jigsaw," in which they were divided up into groups and had to put together a jigsaw puzzle of a map of the USA. At first, they had to try to put the puzzle together silently, and then they were allowed to speak to each other about the process.

The teachers also heard about different learning styles, and each of the teachers discussed his/her experience with different learning styles. At the end of the session, the teachers asked a lot of questions about U.S. teachers, classrooms, and schools.



Teachers working in small groups during a workshop in Sarband, January 12, 2010.

Public Affairs Officer Rachel Cooke Meets with Alumni at Khujand American Corner



PAO Rachel Cooke meets with USG program alumni to discuss current alumni projects and upcoming events at the Khujand American Corner, December 15, 2009.

During her visit to Khujand on December 15, 2009, Public Affairs Officer Rachel Cooke met with Khujand alumni at the American Corner. It was not only her first visit to Khujand, but also to the American Corner.

Rachel warmly greeted the participants and introduced herself in Tajik, which endeared her to the participants. She handed out printed announcements about the U.S. Embassy's alumni grant opportunities and then the participants shared their achievements and progress on projects that had already been funded.

Gulchehra Hamidova, TEA program alumna and English teacher at School #4, shared her experience opening a resource center for teachers at her school. The resource center is open to all the teachers in her school and the entire district. It provides computers with internet, printers, and training on how to access teaching materials. FLEX alumnus Romini Masum shared his idea to collaborate with his school and create a resource center for both students and teachers. GCEP alumnus Isfandiyor Boboev shared his experience about organizing a leadership club at the Tajik State Commercial University. Rachel was excited to hear about the alumni's ideas and projects and encouraged them to seek co-funding in order to collaborate with the local institutions to realize their projects.

Student Training Mobile Center in Technological University

FLEX alumnus Shuhratjon Ashurov and his classmates created a student training mobile center at the Technological University in Dushanbe. He became the first chairman of the center.

This center conducts motivational seminars and training sessions about public speaking, time management, and leadership.



Shuhratjon Ashurov at the student training mobile center at the Technological University in Dushanbe, January 2010.

Youth Comedy Competition Dedicated to Healthy Lifestyle



A team of FLEX alumni won 1st place at a youth comedy competition in Dushanbe, December 12, 2009.

Among the greatest accomplishments of Tajik FLEX alumni in 2009 was competing against four youth organizations in front of more than 350 people from different NGOs and companies in a youth comedy competition dedicated to a healthy lifestyle, and winning first place. The competition was held in the Vefa Center on the December 12. The competition consisted of three parts: Introduction, musical number, and Q&A. The FLEX alumni all wore FLEX t-shirts while performing. Participants included FLEX alumni Temur Babaev, Muminjoniyon Abdulvahobi, Nushofarin Noziri, and Saidakram Ishanov, as well as their friends, Sahib Ruzibaev, Amon Abudaminov, Farzona Kholmatova, Bonu Kholmatova, Firdavs Sharipov, and Firuz Abudaminov. Other alumni, including Zevar Bobojonova, Ardasher Khashimov, Ilhom Aliev, Farhod Umarov, Jalili Ruhafzuni, and Siyovush Saidov helped the team prepare for the competition.

The event brought together recent FLEX alumni with FLEX alumni from less-recent program years. Guests from the U.S. Embassy and American Councils were invited.

Grant Proposal Writing Seminar

On December 25, 2009, a grant writing seminar was conducted by FLEX Program Coordinator Uktam Abdulloev. He introduced the alumni to a grant that the U.S. Embassy in Tajikistan offers to the alumni of USG-funded programs. He gave them useful tips on writing grant proposals and also gave them some ideas on different kinds of projects they might consider. Ten alumni participated the seminar. Among them was freelance interpreter and FLEX alumnus, Daler Karimov. He talked about his experience with writing grants and encouraged the other alumni to write projects and grants.

Community Connections Alumnus Presents Ten Short Plays

In December 2009, Numon Abduhamedon, along with actors from the Lakhuti Theater, presented ten short plays in rural districts around Dushanbe to teach the rural population in three targeted districts—Gissar, Shahrinav, and Tursunzade—about TB prevention.

Tuberculosis is a big problem in Tajikistan. According to the National TB Control Center, between 2,800 and 3,500 new cases of TB are registered each year in Tajikistan, and this trend continues to go upward. The poor socioeconomic situation in Tajikistan contributes to spread of TB. The situa-

tion is worsened due to a lack of preventive measures.

Performance art is widely used in the U.S. as a preventive medicine tool. There are various programs which raise awareness among mostly young population about topics like the harmfulness of smoking, how to maintain a healthy lifestyle, and how to prevent HIV. Drawing on his experience in the U.S., Numon Abduhamedov, alumnus of the Community Connections Healthy Lifestyle Education Program, developed a series of educational plays, including two plays about TB and HIV prevention that have



become very popular in Dushanbe and surrounding neighborhoods.

Follow-up studies have shown that the plays raised awareness about HIV and tuberculosis. Seeing this, Numon expanded the series to include other topics.

Theater performance on the issue of HIV/AIDs prevention at the Dushanbe Lakhuti Theater, December 2009.

Alumni and American Corner Volunteers Visit Dehmay Orphanage



Children reciting poems at a New Year's event in the Sughd region, December 2009

In order to strengthen community outreach and motivate the youth for volunteer service activities, American Corner Khujand organized a charity drive to collect gifts, diapers, warm socks, and clothes for the Dehmay Orphanage, and then delivered the donations. The American Corner also organized a short performance, "Santa and the Snow Girl Come to the Orphanage," for the children.

After the performance, the alumni presented New Year's gifts, cookies, and lunch to the children of the orphanage.

Open World Group on Child Protection Organizes Charity Drives



Alumni event for vulnerable children in Isfara, December 4, 2009.

Returning from their U.S. exchange visit highly motivated to initiate change in their home communities, recent alumni of Open World's Child Protection group immediately set to work improving the lives of needy children in Tajikistan.

Upon his return to Tajikistan, Musso Toshkhujaev, Chairman of the

Child Rights Department of Isfara and an alumnus of the Child Protection program, initiated three events for children. The first activity was conducted on November 20, in honor of the 20-year anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on Child Rights Protection in Tajikistan. Before the activity, Toshkhujaev gathered 60 kilograms of honey for orphaned children from private businessmen and beekeepers. The event was conducted with the support of the Khukumat (local administration) and UNICEF at the House of Culture in the city of Isfara, located in the remote northern part of Tajikistan. 220 orphaned children were invited.

and distributed gifts to each child. The gifts included food, stationery, and jars of honey.

On December 4, in cooperation with the Khukumat and UNICEF, Toshkhujaev brought children and their parents to participate in games and activities. The owner of the Oyatulloh Teahouse, where the event was held, after observing how happy the children were, decided not to charge for the rental of the space.

Toshkhujaev organized a concert for the children



"Children and their parents felt like full members and significant part of the society," said Musso Toshkhujaev, Chairman of the Child Rights Department of Isfara and Open World alumnus.

Charity Drive in Dushanbe



"Now I have a jacket for winter," said one boy from the Reception Center for Minors.

During their trip to the U.S., the Open World group on child protection received \$50 from Friendship Force International (Lincoln, Nebraska), their U.S. host organization, as a donation to help Tajik children. After their return to Tajikistan, the group approached UNICEF/Child Protection Department in Dushanbe to help identify the groups who would benefit the most from the donation. UNICEF conducted a needs assessment and identified four institutions in the greatest need of help. Shortly afterward, Anora Akbarova, the facilitator of the child protection group and Program Coordinator for Open World in Tajikistan, announced the beginning of a charity drive for needy children. As a result of this very successful charity drive, which involved both the local and international communities, clothes for boys and girls were collected, and the alumni received a generous donation from the Rotary Club in Dushanbe as well as money donated by private individuals.

On November 26, the Open World alumni, together with their facilitator, conducted a

series of charity events. All visits to the institutions were conducted with the technical and informational support of UNICEF/Child Protection Department.

The group visited four needy institutions:

1. Reception

Center for Minors, an organization dealing with orphans and neglected children ages 3 to 14. The children received new sneakers donated by the Rotary Club in Dushanbe and clothing from the charity drive. "Now I have a jacket for winter," said one boy.

2. Special School for Children in Conflict with the Law, which houses male nonviolent offenders of 11 to 16 years from poor families. Almost all of the boys received new sneakers, and some received clothing from the charity drive. The children were really happy to get new shoes in time for the upcoming winter.

3. Special Vocational School for Minors from Vulnerable Families. This boarding school houses 30 boys ages 14 to 18. Open World alumni purchased 13 chickens and two roosters for the school using donated funds. The chickens and roosters were delivered to the Special Vocational School, which already has its own hen house.

4. Charogi Hidoyat Center for Girls. This

center consists of the Girls Support Service (there are six girls currently living there who were victims of domestic violence) and a dormitory for orphaned girls who are studying at universities and vocational colleges. Makhbuba Muhitdinova, OW alumna and facilitator of the OW group passed donated clothes to the psychologist working with abused girls, and gave fabric to the Director of Charogi Hidoyat Center. The girls have their first sewing class on December 9 and will make pajamas for themselves for winter.

The Open World group came to the conclusion that it is possible, with activism, "to integrate and implement volunteerism and the joint cooperation of state organizations, NGOs, and the private sector in Tajikistan, just as we observed during our trip to the USA."

Community Connections Alumna Advocates for Loan Management and Gender Equality

[Community Connections](#) alumna Nigora Negmatulaeva is thriving in her mission to promote gender equality and provide access to financial resources. As a loan expert in Tajikistan, she went to the U.S. to study loan management. Using the knowledge gained on her exchange, she persuaded her branch to create a separate office that works specifically with overdue loans. Thanks to Negmatulaeva's idea, the bank has been able to focus its efforts on specific loan issues.

Since her return, she has been active in promoting gender equality, focusing specifically on empowering women. Negmatulaeva tackles this issue using a two-sided approach; not only does she volunteer with an NGO that focuses on women, she also works with young girls to persuade them to pursue higher education. Recognizing that education can be used as a bridge between cultures, she has started a program that allows an organization to adopt a Tajik kindergarten class, which has led to fundraising campaigns in the United States to promote learning about life in Tajikistan.

Negmatulaeva's exchange experience has encouraged others to follow in her footsteps. Through the Community Connections Alumni Association that she helped to create, she also urges those who have already experienced an exchange to share their ideas with other alumni.



Nigora Negmatulaeva (center), Community Connections alumna, at a Halloween event in Dushanbe.



TEA Alumnus Helps His Community Learn English

Tojiddin Haitov is an educator and an alumnus of the Teaching Excellence Achievement Program ([TEA](#)). During his six-week exchange in the U.S., he learned about new methodologies to teach English. After completing the program, Haitov has used his

new skills to make a difference in his community.

Haitov continues to pass on information from the TEA program through several small grants from the [U.S. Embassy](#). With the money from the first grant, he established the English Language Resource Center,

which provides access to educational materials, including English literature, tapes, computer programs, and DVDs. Haitov has also held workshops to train teachers from Qurghon-Teppa about the new techniques acquired on his trip.



Tojiddin Haitov (center) gives computer classes to teachers in Qurghon-Teppa, 2009.



Tojiddin Haitov (left) teaches English teaching methodology to local teachers in Qurghon-Teppa, 2009.

Committing himself to equipping the community with much-needed skills, Haitov arranged for his school to have internet access. Naming the initiative "Internet Connecting People," he helped train another 40 teachers on creating portfolios and integrating computers and the internet into English lessons. Haitov has also given computer lessons to children who are from families in need. During his last project, he used grant money to teach English and computer lessons and also provided 100 students with school supplies.

Since returning, Haitov has been promoted to senior teacher of English in the Qurghon-Teppa secondary school system. In 2008, his class was one of the few chosen for a visit by the president of Tajikistan. This year, Haitov was recognized as "Teacher of the Year" both for the city of Qurghon-Teppa and also for the entire region.

Community Connection Alumna Creates Center for Children

A U.S. study program inspires a Tajik woman to develop a center for children in her own country.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KNREWp79gFY>

A USAID study program to the U.S. state of Iowa, which brought together women leaders from Tajikistan, provided the inspiration and model for Hairinisso Elmurodova's resource center for children. The center provides various services to children who are in need of medical, psychological, recreational, and professional skill development.



Hairinisso Elmurodova (right), USAID-sponsored Community Connections Program alumna, teaches girls to weave baskets at a child's rights center in Bokhtar District, Khatlon Region, Tajikistan.

Ms. Hairinisso Elmurodova, a trainer representing a women's rights association from rural Bokhtar, was among ten participants from Tajikistan who were accepted as members of a group of women leaders who would travel to the United States as participants in the USAID Community Connections Program. The program provides an important opportunity for Americans and people from across Eurasia to work together to address common professional challenges while expanding their social and cultural understanding. Ms. Elmurodova was inspired by her visit to meet the need in her own country to provide services to disadvantaged children.

The visit to Ames, Iowa included site visits to counterpart organizations. The women met with many American women leaders, among them the heads of corporations and NGOs, the governor of Iowa, and the mayor of Ames. Members

of the group said it was an eye-opening experience to learn that governors and officials are elected in the U.S., not appointed. Group members also had the opportunity to meet then-presidential candidates Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton due to the timing of their visit during the run up to the U.S. presidential elections.

Ms. Elmurodova was deeply impressed by the services available for troubled and disadvantaged children in Iowa and realized that the same kinds of services would benefit children in her own country. Tajikistan has the lowest GDP per capita in Eurasia and Central Europe (\$247). Unemployment is high at more than 50% and many able-bodied men leave to work in Russia and other countries, resulting in further strain on the women and children left behind. Youth unemployment is also high at more than 27%.

Ms. Elmurodova decided that solutions similar to ones she had seen in Iowa could work in Tajikistan. After her return, she began working to make her ideas a reality. She founded the Shodi Organization, which provides various services to children who are in need of medical, psychological, recreational, and professional skill development. The center also works to raise awareness on children's issues.

GCE Turns Dreams into a Reality for Rural Tajik FLEX, TEA, and Muskie Participants



Celebrate International Education Week: November 16–20

Selected as a Muskie finalist, Ibrahim Rustamov, the former Tajikistan GCE Project Director, is now studying Educational Technology at the University of Hartford. Using skills he learned through GCE, he mentors fifth-grade students and intends to write his master's thesis on the role of emerging technologies in education. Formerly a GCE participant for three years, Madina Khakimova is now a FLEX student living in Palestine, Texas. Madina uses skills learned through GCE to become a featured blogger on Exchanges Connect. Zebonisa, who recently attended classes in North Dakota as a TEA finalist, has been involved in GCE since its inception in 2003. During her six weeks in the U.S., Zebonisa often posted videos and lesson plans on the GCE website to share with her peers back home. Madina, Zebonisa, and Ibrahim live in rural parts of Tajikistan where education resources and opportunities are scarce. Rustamov writes, "I am indebted for the GCE program which helped me to grow personally and professionally. Without GCE, as a teacher from a remote area of Tajikistan, I could never learn how to utilize technology in both learning and teaching. GCE helped me to understand technologies and learn about the world and learn about experiences of others."

Alumni Updates

Upon his return to Tajikistan, Farkhod Makhmudov, OW Alumnus on Child Protection, prepared an article "Notes About My U.S. Trip." The article was published on October 26 by the local newspaper *Bokhtar*.

On November 26, Mr. Makhmudov gave a presentation on child rights protection at the Khukumat (local government authority) in the Bokhtar region. 150 people, representing the government, private sector, heads of NGOs, health departments, and other involved parties, were in attendance. Mr. Makhmudov shared his impressions of the Open World program and the activities aimed at child protection.

On November 25, UNICEF/Child Protection Department and the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan conducted a roundtable on country-specific strategic programs on child protection. Government representatives, representatives of UNICEF, and all five Open World alumni from the child protection program were in attendance. OW alumnus Abubakr Inomov gave a presentation on child protection and gave a number of recommendations. The Tajik Government intends to decrease the number of closed institutions for children in order to reintegrate at-risk children into their families. Mr. Inomov, Department Head at the Ministry of Justice, recommended applying the US "Backpack" program in Tajikistan (a bag of essential foods to be distributed on Friday for children and their family members in need for the weekend they spend at home). He suggested implementing the program using funds saved by the closure of some institutions for children.

We welcome our alumni to contribute articles and information for the newsletter. If you would like to share your experience or success stories with the alumni community please contact Shafoat Kabilova at KobilovaS@state.gov

Join State Alumni: Your Global Community for alumni of State Department exchange

Who are Alumni? Your Global Community!

Alumni are past participants of U.S. government-sponsored exchange programs. With more than 1,000,000 alumni worldwide, State Alumni include world leaders, achievers, and influencers. Among this global community are 47 Nobel Laureates and over 300 chiefs of state or heads of government. They are politicians, CEOs, teachers, authors, artists, and most importantly, you! As an alumnus/a of a State Department-funded exchange program, you are part of a global community of the best and brightest. Build upon your exchange experience to advance your goals, your community, and our world.

State Alumni: Opportunities and resources for you to connect with other alumni

- Hundreds of grant, job, and event postings
- Over 20,000 free titles in the online research center
- Access to apply for over \$33 billion in funding opportunities
- News about alumni projects; alumni success stories
- Participate in Q&A Live discussions with experts
- Share your reflections or research publications and join discussion forums
- Find fellow alumni to network with others in your field or your region
- Search for resumes or add your own to the global community

Continue the exchange as alumni!

- Be active in your local alumni community
- Join State Alumni (<https://alumni.state.gov>) and the international social network "Exchanges Connect" <http://connect.state.gov/>
- Discover, meet, share, learn, grow, and achieve!

U.S. Embassy Dushanbe

Web: <http://dushanbe.usembassy.gov/>
<http://russian.dushanbe.usembassy.gov/>

Sign up for the mailing list from the Public Diplomacy section of the U.S. Embassy Dushanbe to find out about these programs and more! Simply send a blank e-mail message to usembassydushanbeprogram-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

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Kulob American Corner

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Educational Advising Center

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